

Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment for the South Atlantic Region

Frequently Asked Questions March 2012

What will the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment do?

- The Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment establishes annual catch limits and accountability measures for species in the Snapper-Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, Golden Crab, and *Sargassum* Fishery Management Plans (FMP) not subject to overfishing.
 - An annual catch limit is the level of annual catch of a stock or stock complex that if met or exceeded triggers some corrective action, such as a seasonal closure or a quota closure. Annual catch limits are set at levels that prevent overfishing from occurring.
 - Accountability measures are management controls to prevent annual catch limits from being exceeded, and to correct overages of annual catch limits if they occur. For example, if an annual catch limit for a species is exceeded, the annual catch limit in the following season could be reduced by the amount of the overage.
- The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires all federally managed fisheries be managed with annual catch limits and accountability measures.
- [Amendments 17A](#) and [17B](#) to the Snapper-Grouper FMP specified annual catch limits for species subject to overfishing.
- Annual Catch Limits (pounds whole weight) established by the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment:

Snapper-Grouper FMP

Deep-Water Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL	Shallow-Water Groupers Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL
Yellowedge grouper Blueline tilefish Silk snapper Misty grouper Queen snapper Sand tilefish Black snapper Blackfin snapper	343,869	332,039	Red hind Rock hind Coney Graysby Yellowfin grouper Yellowmouth grouper	49,488	48,329
			Individual ACLs	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL
			Atlantic Spadefish	36,476	246,365
Jacks Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL	Bar Jack	6,686	13,834
Almaco jack Banded rudderfish Lesser amberjack	193,999	261,490	Black grouper	90,575	155,020
			Blue Runner	188,329	1,101,612
			Gray Triggerfish	305,262	367,303
Snappers Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL	Greater Amberjack	800,163	1,167,837

Cubera snapper	204,552	882,388	Hogfish	48,772	98,866
Gray snapper			Mutton Snapper	157,743	768,857
Lane snapper			Red porgy	197,652	197,652
Dog snapper			Scamp	341,636	150,936
Mahogany snapper			Wreckfish	223,250	11,750
Porgies Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL	Yellowtail Snapper	1,142,589	1,031,286
Jolthead porgy	35,129	112,485			
Knobbed porgy					
Saucereye porgy					
Whitebone porgy					
Scup					
Grunts Complex	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL			
White grunt	214,624	562,151			
Margate					
Sailor's choice					
Tomtate					

Dolphin Wahoo FMP

	Commercial ACL	Recreational ACL
Dolphin	1,065,524	13,530,692
Wahoo	64,147	1,427,638

Golden Crab FMP

Commercial ACL
2,000,000

Sargassum FMP

Commercial ACL
5,000

- Accountability measures established by the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment for species in Snapper-Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, Golden Crab, and *Sargassum* FMPs:

Commercial sector:

- No commercial annual catch target.
- If an annual catch limit (i.e., individual or complex) is met or is projected to be met, all subsequent purchase and sale will be prohibited and harvest and/or possession will be limited to the bag limit for the species covered by that annual catch limit. For example, if a complex annual catch limit is met or projected to be met, all purchase and sale of all the species in the complex will be prohibited and harvest and/or possession will be limited to the bag limit.
- If an annual catch limit (i.e., individual or complex) is exceeded, the Regional Administrator will publish a notice to reduce the annual catch limit in the

following season by the amount of the overage, but only if the species or a species in a complex is overfished.

Recreational sector:

- Annual catch target equals annual catch limit*(1-percent standard error) or annual catch limit *0.5, whichever is greater.
- Accountability measures will be triggered if the annual landings (i.e., individual or complex) exceed the annual catch limit in a given year.
- If the annual catch limit is exceeded, the following year's landings will be monitored in-season for persistence in increased landings. The Regional Administrator will publish a notice to reduce the length of the fishing season as necessary.
- In addition to establishing annual catch limits and accountability measures, the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment:
 - Removes 13 species from the snapper-grouper fishery management unit;

Groupers	Jacks	Grunts	Porgies	Triggerfish	Wrasses
Tiger	Crevalle	Black margate	Grass	Queen	Puddingwife
	Yellow	Blue-striped	Sheepshead		
		French			
		Porkfish			
		Smallmouth			
		Spanish			

- Designates six species as ecosystem component species in the snapper-grouper fishery management unit;

Snappers	Grunts	Porgies	Triggerfish	Sea basses
Schoolmaster	Cottonwick	Longspine	Ocean	Bank
				Rock

- Specifies species groups for remaining species in the snapper-grouper fishery management unit. Single species annual catch limits are established for assessed and targeted species, species where annual catch limit=0, and species that cannot be placed in a complex based on the criteria below. Complexes for groups of species are established for other species using associations based on one or more of the following: life history; catch statistics from commercial logbook and observer data, recreational headboat logbook and private/charter survey, and fishery-independent MARMAP data. When a complex annual catch limit is exceeded, all species in that complex is subject to accountability measures. When an individual annual catch limit is exceeded, the individual stock will be subject to accountability measures;

Deepwater Complex	Individual ACLs
Yellowedge grouper	Atlantic spadefish
Blueline tilefish	Greater amberjack ₁
Silk Snapper	Blue runner
Misty grouper ₂	Bar jack
Sand tilefish	Gray triggerfish
Queen snapper	Snowy grouper ₁
Black snapper	Golden tilefish ₁
Blackfin snapper	Warsaw grouper ₃
Jacks Complex	Wreckfish
Almaco jack	Scamp
Banded rudderfish	Gag ₁
Lesser amberjack ₂	Red grouper ₁
Snappers Complex	Goliath grouper _{1,3}
Gray snapper	Nassau grouper ₃
Lane snapper	Black sea bass ₁
Cubera snapper ₂	Black grouper ₁
Dog snapper	Speckled hind ₃
Mahogany snapper	Red porgy ₁
Grunts Complex	Hogfish ₁
White grunt	Yellowtail snapper ₁
Sailors choice ₂	Red snapper ₁
Tomtate	Vermilion snapper ₁
Margate	Mutton snapper ₁
Shallow-Water Groupers Complex	Porgies Complex
Red hind	Jolthead porgy
Rock hind	Knobbed porgy
Yellowmouth grouper	Saucereye porgy ₂
Yellowfin grouper ₂	Scup
Coney	Whitebone porgy ₂
Graysby	

1 = Assessed species; 2 = Most vulnerable species in complex (PSA analysis); 3 = Prohibited (ACL = 0).

- Specifies an acceptable biological catch for species in the Snapper-Grouper, Dolphin Wahoo, Golden Crab, and *Sargassum* FMPs. Acceptable biological catch is the level of a stock or stock complex's annual catch that accounts for scientific uncertainty, such as variability or gaps in data;
- Specifies annual catch targets for species in the Snapper-Grouper and Dolphin Wahoo FMPs. Annual catch targets are annual catch levels specified below the annual catch limits. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) specified an annual catch target for the recreational sector, to account for management uncertainty, such as compliance rates;
- Establishes allocations: Jurisdictional (between the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico) for black grouper, mutton snapper, and yellowtail snapper, and Sector (commercial and recreational) for snapper-grouper and dolphin-wahoo species.
- Establishes management measures:

- Wreckfish: - One wreckfish per vessel daily recreational bag limit;
 - Closed season of January 1 through June 30, and September 1 through December 31 each year, for the recreational sector.
- Dolphin: - Prohibit recreational bag limit sales of dolphin from for hire vessels;
 - Establish a minimum size limit for dolphin of 20 inches (50.8 cm) fork length for South Carolina.

Who is affected by the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment?

- Commercial and recreational fishers who fish for snapper-grouper species, and commercial fishers harvesting golden crab in South Atlantic federal waters (3-200 miles offshore), off North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The actions in this amendment will also apply to commercial and recreational fishers who target dolphin and wahoo, from Maine to Florida, along the Atlantic coast.

When will the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment be effective?

- The Council approved the amendment on September 16, 2011, for review by the Secretary of Commerce.
- Following comment periods on the notice of availability for the amendment and the proposed rules, NOAA Fisheries Service approved the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment on January 18, 2012.
- The Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment will be implemented on **April 16, 2012**.

Where can I get more information on actions in the Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment and Final Rule?

- The Comprehensive Annual Catch Limit Amendment and the Final Rule may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Service Web site at: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SAACLAmd.htm> and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>.
- For more information, contact Nikhil Mehta at (727) 824-5305.